

The Old Paths

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"Spanking"

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It must have been a slow news week this last week, because I heard of two news stories where people were weighing the "pros and cons" of spanking children as a punishment for misbehavior. The issue of "corporal punishment", and specifically the spanking of children when they misbehave and disobey, has become a subject of controversy as more and more in our society wish to stray from what God considers necessary in proper parenting; and instead following their own whims, or the thoughts of so-called "educated" men.

Man's philosophy and thinking wants to tell us that spanking children hurts their egos, leads to depression, and countless other maladies. Is this right? Since God has our best interests in mind in the Bible, it seems strange to me that God would encourage us to do something that would harm future generations.

The Bible Speaks Of God's Punishment Of Man.

There are occasions when it is said that God punishes His children. This punishment is compared to an earthly father punishing a son. We read about this in Hebrews 12:6-12. The writer notes that just as our fathers punished us, and we came to respect them, so also, let us respect our Father in Heaven when He corrects us! In the book of Proverbs,

we also read about God's punishment when Solomon says, *"My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline or be weary of his reproof, for the LORD reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights"* (Prov. 3:11-12).

The Bible's Instruction Concerning Spanking.

In like manner, just as it is appropriate for God to punish His children at times, so also our physical children need corrected and punished when they break the rules of the house. When reading Scripture, we find some of the clearest words concerning this subject as has ever been written on any Bible subject! The Lord says:

- ◆ *"Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him"* (Prov. 13:24).
- ◆ *"Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying"* (Prov. 19:28).
- ◆ *"Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him"* (Prov. 22:15).
- ◆ *"Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell"* (Prov. 23:13-14).
- ◆ *"The rod and reproof give wisdom:*

but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul" (Prov. 29:15, 17).

- ◆ *"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord"* (Eph. 6:4).

Many other passages could be added to our study, but these show us God's thoughts on the matter of "corporal punishment." When studying these texts, it is interesting to note that the English word translated "rod" is actually a word that could have just as easily been translated as: "switch"! Have we ever had a "switch" used on us? This is the idea. The Lord says when a switch is applied to a child ("rod of correction") it will produce wonderful results such as: drive away foolishness, give parents rest and delight, and ultimately deliver a soul from Hell (Prov. 22:15, 29:15, 17, 23:13-14)! Doing things the Lord's way produces godly, balanced and "functional" families, not dysfunctional ones! To neglect to obey the Lord in this area of parenting is not to show love, but to show hatred for a child (Prov. 13:24)!

Conclusion

Just like every other command in the Bible, we can find those who are abusing this rule. They are in sin and wrong for abusing God's plan. Yet, let not those who sin deter those who are trying to do what is right! Applying the Lord's rules of instruction and correction produces obedient, well-mannered children who respect authority. It has been proven time and again throughout history that when we do things the Lord's way, then blessing comes. Let us not deprive our children and grandchildren of blessings! Correct them!



I Study My Bible Like I Plow My Field

Unknown

A farmer explained: "I study my Bible like I plow my field. Oftentimes when I'm plowing or breaking new ground, my plow will get hung under a root, and if I'm going at a pretty good clip it will really jar me. But I don't get mad and beat my mule and burn my plow. No, I just back up a little, ease over the root and get on with my plowing. Next time around I'll probably hit that root again and it still shakes me up, but I don't quit farming. I just back up, ease over the root and keep on working. Pretty soon I have hit that root so many times that it's loose and the first thing you know I plow right through it and don't even notice it. I've got it shook loose."

That's the way I study the Bible. When I come upon a hard passage, it might shake me up a little bit, but I don't throw away my Bible and quit the Lord on that account. I just ease over it and keep on studying. The next time I read that passage I jar it a little bit more. I keep on doing this until finally, because of information that I have gathered from other parts of the Bible I am able to jar the passage loose. I understand it."



Editor's Note:

This article above needs to be read two or three times! How many times have we found passages in Scripture that are hard to

understand at first? We all have found them, haven't we? Even the apostle Peter said Paul had written some things that are "*hard to understand*" (II Pet. 3:16). Yet, this should not make us want to quit the Lord or quit studying the Bible! "Hard to understand" does not mean impossible to understand! Further, note that Peter continues by saying the "*ignorant and unstable twist* (the words Paul wrote - JJ) *to their own destruction*"! In other words, we are expected to comprehend and understand even the "hard" things" in Scripture!! Let us strive for greater knowledge of God's word. This comes through the constant reading and studying of the Scripture. David said the "*blessed man*" meditates "*day and night*" in God's word (Ps. 1:2). Could we said we are this diligent? If not, why not? What is our excuse?

When we come across a difficult passage, a good rule of thumb I was taught is that we make sure to interpret it in light of the passages we already understand. The Bible does not contradict itself. Therefore, the difficult passage will not be teaching something the "easier" passages are not! Usually, when we go to easier passages, we gain insight which then helps us with the more difficult passage.

The worst thing we can do is to become frustrated and ignore God's word, or quit studying altogether. If we do this, then we are trading light for darkness (Ps. 119:105). We are trading sweetness for bitterness (Ps. 119:103). We are trading life for death (Ps. 119:93). Let us not make such a great and grave error as this. God's word saves us (Jas. 1:21; Rom. 1:16)!

Therefore, instead of quitting on the Lord when running across a difficult passage of Scripture, just keep on studying (II Tim. 2:15)! Meditate upon God's word (Ps. 1:2), and make sure and obey what we learn (Heb. 5:9)! As we mature in the Lord, the difficult passages we find will become easier to understand. As we compare those passages with the "easier" ones, we are sure to gain great insight into the mind of God and better quip ourselves for life upon this earth and for eternity (II Tim. 3:16-17).

Friend, how is your Bible study coming along? I hope you are not being negligent in this. I hope you have not come across a difficult passage and quit out of frustration. Continue studying. Continue learning. As a result, you can have true wisdom (Ps. 119:98-100), and be well-equipped for our struggles we have with Satan (Jas. 4:7-8; Eph. 6:13-18; II Cor. 10:3-5).

Your Bible questions answered ...
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